

an Poetry

POEMS

BY

ROBERT S. CHILTON.



GODERICH:

McGILLICUDDY BROS., SIGNAL PRINTING HOUSE.

1885.

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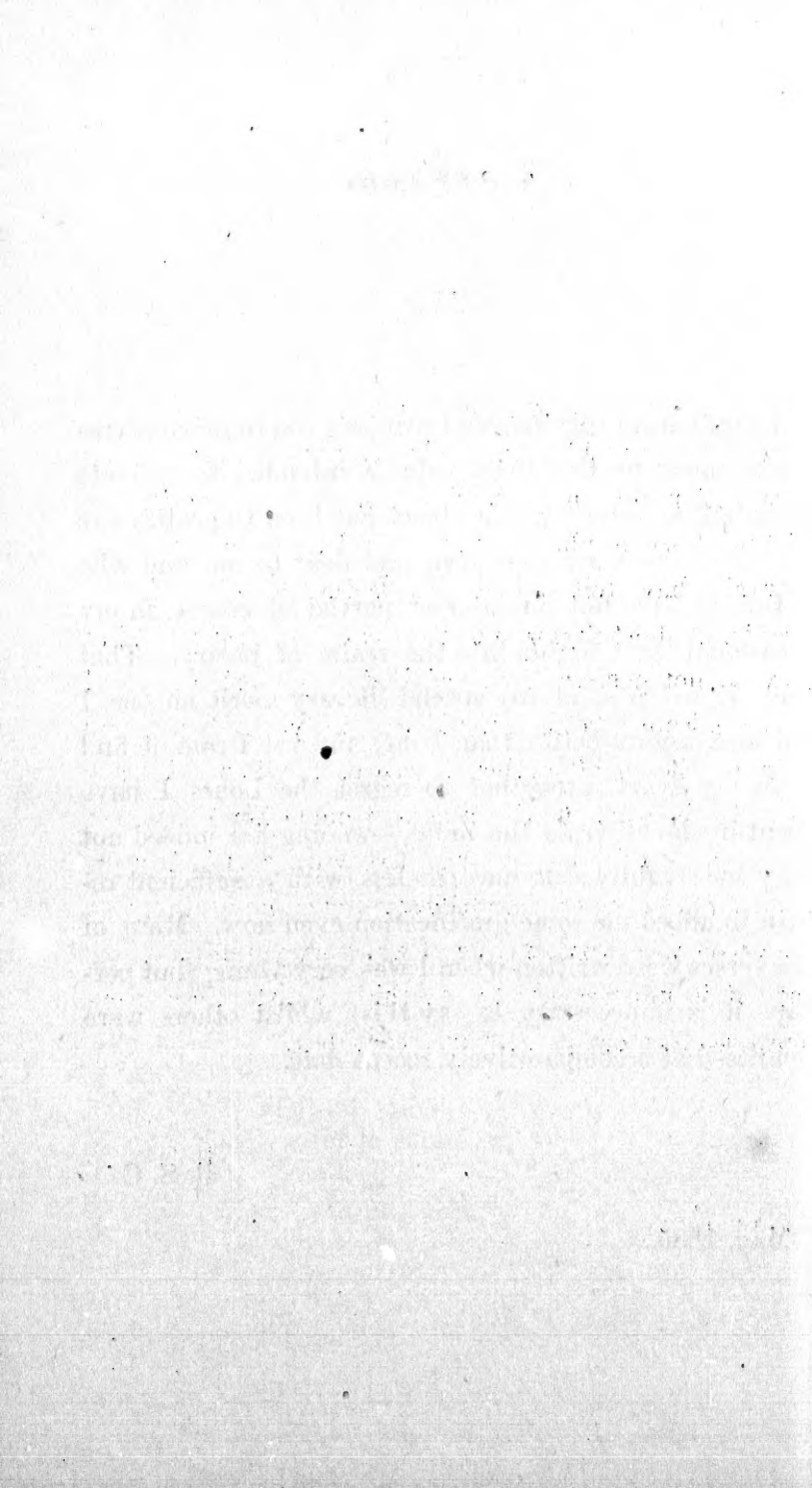
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PREFACE.

IN gathering together and printing the fugitive poems which make up this little volume, intended for private distribution only, my sole object has been to gratify the wishes of some who are near and dear to me, and who naturally have felt an interest, partial of course, in my occasional short flights into the realm of poetry. That they do not possess any special literary merit no one, I am sure, knows better than I do; and yet I cannot find it in my heart altogether to regret the hours I have spent in devotion to the muse,—wooing her indeed not very successfully, but nevertheless with a sufficient return to afford me some gratification even now. Many of the verses were written when I was very young (but perhaps it is unnecessary to say this), whilst others were composed at a comparatively recent date.

R. S. C. /

May, 1885.



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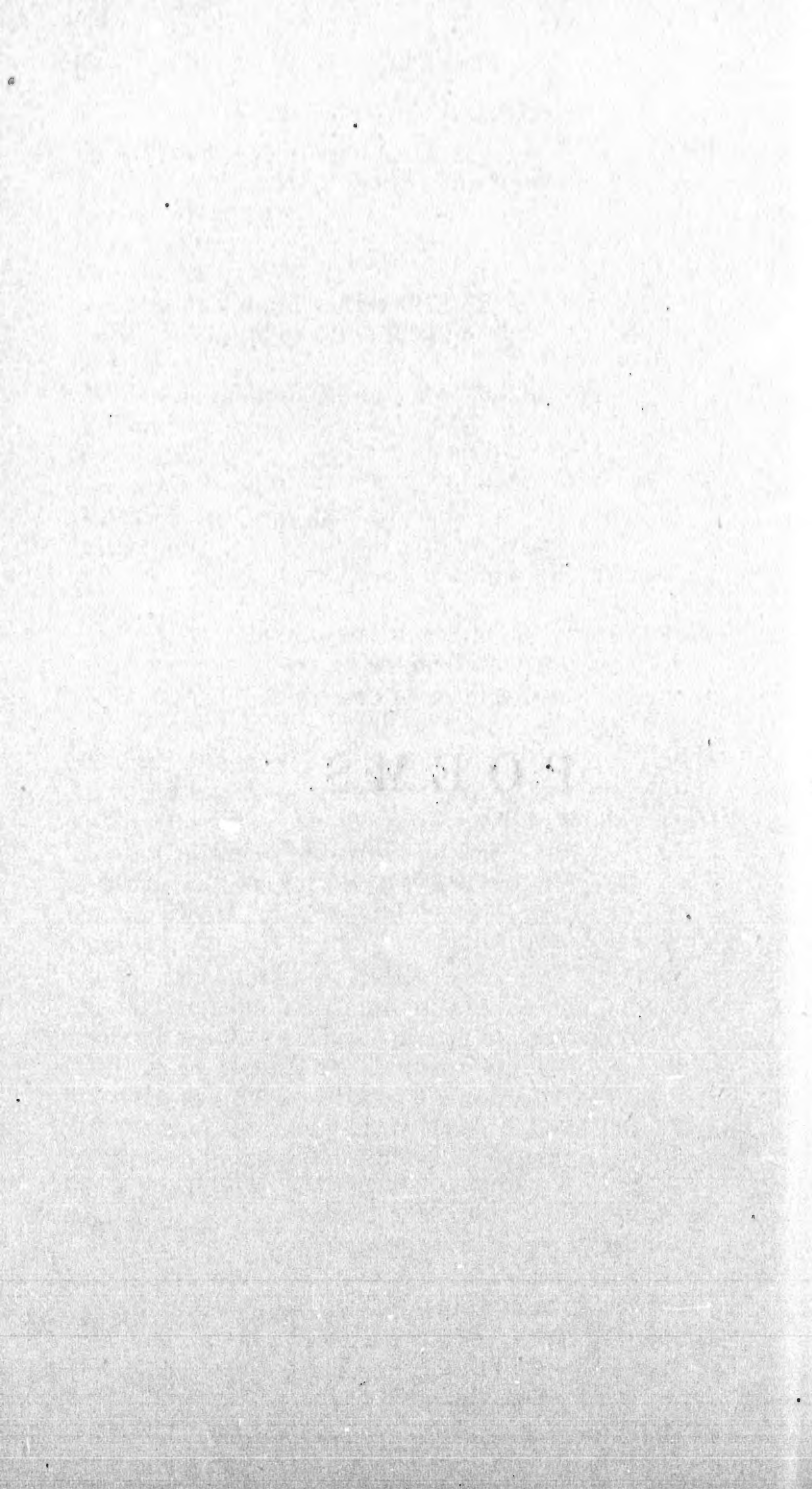
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POEMS.



THE MOTHER'S FIRST GRIEF.

She sits beside the cradle,
And her tears are streaming fast,
For she sees the present only,
While she thinks of all the past ;—
Of the days so full of gladness
When her first-born's answering kiss
Thrilled her soul with such a rapture
That it knew no other bliss.
O those happy, happy moments !
They but deepen her despair,
For she bends above the cradle,
And her baby is not there !

There are words of comfort spoken,
And the leaden clouds of grief
Wear the smiling bow of promise,
And she feels a sad relief ;
But her wavering thoughts will wander
Till they settle on the scene
Of the dark and silent chamber,
And of all that might have been ;—
For a little vacant garment,
Or a shining tress of hair,
Tells her heart, in tones of anguish,
That her baby is not there !

She sits beside the cradle,
But her tears no longer flow ;
For she sees a blessed vision
And forgets all earthly woe ;
Saintly eyes look down upon her,
And the Voice that hushed the sea
Stills her spirit with the whisper—
"Suffer them to come to Me."
And while her soul is lifted
On the soaring wings of prayer,
Heaven's crystal gates swing inward,
And she sees her baby there !

THE EXILE'S RETURN.

[READ AT THE RE-INTERMENT OF THE REMAINS OF JOHN
HOWARD PAYNE, AUTHOR OF "HOME, SWEET HOME,"
AT WASHINGTON, D. C., JUNE 9TH, 1882.]

The exile hath returned, and now at last
In kindred earth his ashes shall repose.—
Fit recompense for all his weary past
That here the scene should end,—the drama close.

Here where his own loved skies o'erarch the spot,
And where familiar trees their branches wave ;
Where the dear home-born flowers he ne'er forgot
Shall bloom, and shed their dew upon his grave.

Will not the wood-thrush, pausing in her flight,
Carol more sweetly o'er this place of rest ?
Here linger longest in the fading light,
Before she seeks her solitary nest ?

Not his the lofty lyre, but one whose strings
Were gently touched to soothe our human kind,—
Like the mysterious harp that softly sings,
Swept by the unseen fingers of the wind.

The home-sick wanderer in a distant land,
Listening his song has known a double bliss ;—
Felt the warm pressure of a father's hand,
And—seal of seals !—a mother's sacred kiss.

In humble cottage, as in hall of state,
His truant fancy never ceased to roam
O'er backward years, and—irony of fate !—
Of home he sang who never found a home !—

Not even in death, poor wanderer, till now,—
 For long his ashes slept in alien soil.
 Will they not thrill to-day, as round his brow
 A fitting wreath is twined with loving toil?

Honor and praise be his whose generous hand
 Brought the sad exile back, no more to roam;
 Back to the bosom of his own loved land—
 Back to his kindred, friends, his own *Sweet Home!*

EPITAPH ON THE TOMB OF JOHN HOWARD

PAYNE AT TUNIS.

Sure, when thy gentle spirit fled
 To realms beyond the azure dome,
 With arms outstretched, God's angels said—
 "Welcome to Heaven's 'Home, Sweet Home!'"

DIRGE FOR AN INFANT.

He is dead and gone—a flower
Born and withered in an hour.
Coldly lies the death-frost now
On his little rounded brow ;
And the seal of darkness lies
Ever on his shrouded eyes.
He will never feel again
Touch of human joy or pain ;
Never will his once bright eyes
Open with a glad surprise,
Nor the death-frost leave his brow—
All is over with him now.

Vacant now his cradle-bed,
As a nest from whence hath fled
Some dear little bird, whose wings
Rest from timid flutterings.
Thrown aside the childish rattle,
Hushed for aye the infant prattle ;—
Little broken words that could
By none else be understood
Save the childless one who weeps
O'er the grave where now he sleeps.
Closed his eyes and cold his brow ;—
All is over with him now !

LITTLE FANNY.

She is not dead—she would not die
And leave us nothing but regret ;
It is but sleep that shrouds that eye,—
I know she's living yet :
What have I done amiss, or thou,
That God should steal our blossom now ?

Her cheeks are cold and white as snow,
Her lips lie languidly apart ;
But I can hear the warm blood flow,—
The music of her heart !
And yet those hands are stiff and chill,—
I never saw them lie so still.

Her rest is very, very deep ;
So deep, her bosom scarcely heaves ;
She seems a flower just gone asleep,
Among whose folded leaves
There lingers a faint, odorous breath :—
Dear God, if this indeed is death !

* * * * *

They tell me thou art free from pain,
They say our parting is but brief ;
But till we meet in Heaven again,
Where shall I hide my grief ?
Priest, I will cease this vain regret,
If thou wilt teach me to forget.

Tomorrow morn the sun will rise,
The stars will shine tomorrow night,
But oh ! how hateful to these eyes
Will seem their once loved light !
There is no longer joy to me
In anything thou canst not see.

All earth's fair forms seem now to me
To take the ugly form of death ;
The very flowers so loved by thee,
Have lost their perfumed breath :
All sounds fall harshly on my ear,
That were most sweet when thou couldst hear.

I know thy sinless soul whose light
To us so brief a time was given,
With kindred spirits, pure and bright,
Is happy now in heaven :—
Dear child ! and yet I cannot bear
To think thy soul is even there !

HEART'S EASE.

I went to gather heart's-ease,
As the day-god sank to rest,—
Drawing all the sheaves of sunlight
To his garner in the west:
When the blossoms and the leaves,
Losing all their golden glow,
In the slowly-gathering twilight,
Faintly fluttered to and fro.

All the ground was starred with May-blooms,—
Everywhere they met my eye ;
But I went to gather heart's-ease,
So I passed all others by.—
O, my soul was ne'er so joyous
As it was in those glad hours,
When I wandered, light and careless,
Near the woodside, plucking flowers.

And I gave them all to you, dear ;
Then I looked upon your face,
And I wondered I could think
That the flowers had any grace :
Then it was I gathered heart's-ease ;
Then it was, dear heart, I found
That the glory of the May-blooms
Did not lie upon the ground !

TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

[WRITTEN ON A FLY-LEAF OF HIS POEMS, 1848.]

True-hearted poet, I foresee in thee
The dawning streaks of that long-sunken sun
Which blazed on sturdy England in the time
Of Queen Elizabeth. No mean conceits,
No maudlin sorrows in affected rhyme,
Cumber thy verse: thine eye of faith is clear,
And reads God's goodness in the humblest flower
That opes its timid eyelid to the dawn.

We need such poets,—earnest, truthful men,
As thou art always; men who look on life
But as the means to a most glorious end;
The stepping-stone to Heaven; the sharp trial
That fits the soul for its high destiny.
Like loving sisters, wand'ring hand in hand,
Philosophy and Poetry attend
And wait upon thee, as thou turnest o'er
The violet's leaves, within whose modest heart
Thou seest a portion of the pulse which throbs
Through the great frame of nature. Burning words,
When, David-like, thou smit'st the ponderous bulk
Of some gigantic error, fly like sparks
Out from the fiery furnace of thy heart,—
Each one a torch wherewith the bright-eyed Truth
Lights up the caves where Wrong and Falsehood dwell.

SHIPWRECK.

A long, low reach of level sand,
 Packed erewhile by the maddened waves
 As the storm-wind drove them toward the land :—
 A boat on the shore, and nothing more,
 Tells of the dead who sank to their graves
 To the sound of the wild sea's roar.

The ship went down at night they say,
 Wrestling with winds and waves to the last,—
 Like a great sea-monster fighting at bay.
 The fisherman tells how he heard the bells
 Ring in the lulls of the pitiless blast,
 Mingled with wild farewells.

The winds are asleep and the sea is still,
 Still as the wrecked beneath its waves—
 Dreamless of all life's good or ill.
 A boat on the shore and nothing more
 Tells of the dead who sank to their graves
 To the sound of the wild sea's roar !

GRANT.

Silent some call thee : haply it were well
 If they who name thee so could earn a fame
 For deeds not words as thou hast. 'Twere the same
 Wert thou as clamorous as a new-swung bell :
 The carping malcontents would still cry blame.

The nation trusted thee when sore beset,
 Battling for life against her recreant foes ;
 She placed thee where thou art, when came repose
 And the sheathed sword,—and she will trust thee yet.
 Noiseless the mighty stream resistless flows,
 Whilst shallow brooklets o'er their pebbles fret.

POWERS' GREEK SLAVE.

A flash of sabres and of scymitars,
Shouts, groans, then silence,—and the crescent waves
Victorious o'er the field where in their graves
The vanquished dead will moulder. But such wars
Have woes that stab the Grecian mother's heart
Deeper than death. In far Byzantium's mart
She sees her captive child, naked, forlorn,
Gazed at by pitiless eyes,—a thing of scorn.

With face averted and with shackled hands,
Clothed only with her chastity she stands.
Her heart is full of tears, as any rose
Bending beneath a shower ; but pride and scorn,
And that fine feeling of endurance born,
Have strung the delicate fibres of her frame
Till not a tear can fall ! Methinks such woes
As thine, pale sufferer, might rend in twain
A heart of sterner stuff—and yet the flame
Of thy pure spirit, like the sacred light
On Hestia's hearth, burns steadily and bright,
Unswayed by sorrow's gusts, unquenched by sorrow's rain.

Thou canst confront, dumb marble as thou art,
And silence those whose lying lips declare
That virtue springs from circumstance, not God ;
The snow that falls where never foot hath trod,
On bleakest mountain-heights, is not more pure
Than thy white soul, though thou stand'st naked there,
Gazed at by those whose lustful passions start
With every heart-throb ! Long may'st thou endure,
To vanquish with thy calm, immaculate brow
The unholy thoughts of men, as thou dost now !

THE LITTLE PEASANT.*

Unstrung by her heart's first sorrow
In the dawn of her life she stands,
With listless fingers holding
A vacant nest in her hands.

The grass at her feet no longer
Is bright with the light of the skies,
As downward she looks through the tear-drops
That stand in her heaven-blue eyes.

For the nest, so cold and forsaken,
Has taught her the lesson to-day,
That the dearest of earthly treasures
Have wings and can fly away.

Yet she clings to the empty casket,
And sighs that no more is left,
As a mother clings to the cradle
Of its dimpled treasure bereft.

Alas ! for the early sorrows
That gather about our way,
When the beautiful light has vanished,
And the hill-tops are cold and gray !

TO KOSSUTH.

[DECEMBER, 1851.]

Kossuth! thine eyes first caught the early glow
That streamed from Freedom's yet unrisen sun,
And lit the Future's peaks—while all below
Was dark as the dark earth when day is done.

That glow lit up thy soul, and meaner men
Saw its reflected splendor in thine eyes,
And, following thy gaze, with anxious ken
Watched for the coming daybreak in the skies.

And timid hearts grew strong, as doubt by doubt
Fled in the light of Freedom's morning star—
Till hope's scarce-kindled flame was trodden out
By the imperious footstep of the Czar.

Thy portion was a dungeon: three long years,
Exiled and fettered, did the vulture Care
Feed on thy Titan heart, and drink thy tears,
But fail to make thy dauntless soul despair.

Three weary years—yet came the hour at last,
The hour that marked thy exodus from pain,
When Freedom blew aloud her trumpest-blast,
Loosened thy gyves, and led thee forth again.

Illustrious Magyar! thou shalt triumph yet;
The world's leagued despots are no match for thee,
Hedged round by good men's prayers, and hopes thick-set—
Mailed in the million wishes of the Free!

GARFIELD.

[AUGUST 19, 1881.]

Low lies he now who lately stood
 Erect,—the Nation's honored head :
 The States,—a sorrowing sisterhood,—
 Stand with locked shields around his bed.

And, with veiled lids and saddened brow,
 Freedom, dear Goddess, bends above
 The prostrate form, so powerless now,
 With looks of earnest, speechless love :—

While through the hush a prayer goes up,—
 The voice of millions blent in one :—
*"Remove, O God, the sufferer's cup,
 Spare, Father, spare thy stricken son !"*

MRS. GARFIELD.

O, type of truest womanhood !
 The deepest wounded, yet most brave !
 Surely the merciful All-Good
 To thee hath given the power to save.

For when the sufferer's eyes were dim
 With mists, presaging all we feared,
 The light in thine which fell on him
 Dispelled those mists, and soothed and cheered.

And when his fainting heart was stirred
 By the bowed Nation's pleading prayer,
 Thine was the unfaltering voice he heard
 That whispered—"*Patience, God will spare !*"

TO A PICTURE BY ELLIOTT.

These curling, golden locks ; the fair, soft cheek ;
The full, ripe mouth, and the clear hazel eyes—
So full of loving trustfulness, so meek,
Beaming with deep and eloquent replies
Which the tongue could not utter—ah ! how these
Bring back to the worn heart sweet childhood's days
When nothing ruder than the summer breeze
Lifted the leaves from the green, sunlit trees,
Arching the bower of youth !—My fancy strays,
As on this semblance of thy face I gaze,
Beautiful child ! to those green lanes once more
Where now thou rovest ; and sweet sounds and sights,
Vague recollections of past, dear delights,
Like fragments of a wreck come floating o'er
The dreary waves, the desolate waste of sea,
That lies, young voyager, 'twixt thee and me.

Yet is there sadness in those large, calm eyes,
A patient sorrow, lovelier than joy ;
A mellow, hazy light, as if the sighs
Breathed by the mother o'er her sleeping boy
Through the long watches of the silent night,
Still lingered round their lids. Alas ! fair child,
That sorrow's shade should make thee seem more bright ;
That thou should'st be more lovely from the blight
On thy young heart, so pure and undefiled !
ELLIOTT, thy magic pencil hath beguiled
My soul away from earth and earthly things ;
And sure thy spirit, when it wrought this face
So full of all imaginable grace,
Was wafted backward on etherial wings
To those far days when a dear mother's kiss
Printed upon thy cheek its seal of bliss.

ALMS-GIVING.

Ay, fill it up, my sister dear,
His brothers all like him are gaunt,
And sisters too ; then do not fear
To choke the gaping mouth of want.
Fill up ! his heart beats quick and high,
The tears stand in his sickly eye ;
Poor wretched, ragged beggar-boy,
He scarce can thank thee now for joy !

The basket's heavy ; what of that ?
His heart is light, he heeds it not ;
His feet are cold and bare, poor brat !
But this has always been his lot.
He trudges on, or stops to steal
Quick glances at the dainty meal ;
And then his purple lips do bless
The heart that pitied his distress.

At home, how will the hungry ones
Clutch at those bits of broken bread !
How will they banquet on those bones,
Like ravens feasting on the dead !
A dainty stomach would refuse
Such food, but " beggars cannot choose ;"
They relish what the rich condemn,
For hunger makes the sauce for them.

WINTER.

A solemn silence reigns o'er all,
A death-like stillness, cold and deep,
As underneath her snowy pall
The old earth lies asleep.

No birds are in the wailing trees,
Whose limbs, all shrunken now and bare,
Sway wildly in the winter breeze
Like withered arms in prayer.

Vainly o'er all these fields of white
The sun looks down ; his feeble beams,
In spots of cold and dazzling light,
Glint from the frozen streams.

The sudden gusts from off the ground
Whirl up light showers of blinding snow,
That, meeting in their frolic round,
Slide to the vale below.

O fettered streams and leafless trees !
O sleeping flowers ! The warm southwest
Will soon send forth his gentle breeze,
And break your icy rest.

O flowers of joy, that once did make
A summer in my breast, what art
Can bid ye bloom again, or break
This winter of the heart ?

LEND A HAND !

Heed the words, thou man of wealth,
Bring back the fading hue of health
To the poor man's sunken cheek ;
Thou art strong and he is weak ;
Thou canst better understand
What his woes are :—" *Lend a Hand !*"

Heed the words, O ye in whom
The softer virtues live and bloom ;
If an erring sister claim
Aid and pity in her shame,
Scorn her not, but take thy stand
On higher ground, and *Lend a Hand !*

HEART-SUMMER.

Steadily falls the cold November rain—
Silently drop the leaves through the damp air ;—
So fall our tears, as sadly and as vain—
So earthward drop our hopes and leave us bare.

The bird has wandered from the leafless bough,
The sky is cold and gray—a leaden pall ;
And in his frosty loom chill Winter now
Weaves the white shroud that soon will cover all.

Cold—sad :—but hark ! I hear the summer breeze,
And noise of waters rushing to the sea ;
I see the laughing flowers and waving trees,—
For all is summer when I think of thee !

THOMAS HOOD.

Great poets never die ; their words are seeds
Which sheltered in the hearts of men take root,
And grow and flourish into high-souled deeds—
The world's sustaining fruit.

No idle dreamers they, nor light their task,
Who, with a weapon simple as a song,
Defend the Right, and tear the lying mask
From the foul face of Wrong ;

Who 'neath the coarsest, foulest rags can see
Some glimpses of the never-dying spark
That lights the front of frail humanity,
As stars illumine the dark.

And such was he, whose spirit shot a ray
Of sunlight through the sad hearts of the poor ;—
The dawning of that brighter, better day,
No longer now obscure.

Patient in suffering, calm amid the strife
Of this bleak world, how patiently he wrought !—
Weaving bright threads through the sad woof of life,
In the great loom of Thought.

The music of his words, falling on ears
Dulled with the droning of the workshop wheel,
Hath robbed the humble toiler of his tears,
And taught him how to feel.

Fought he not bravely ? Answer, ye oppressed :
Fought he not wisely ?—Let the future say :
The sun that sets in such a golden west
Heralds a golden day.

RAB.

A little mound in the garden,
Aside from the box-bordered walk,
Tells in such language as flowers
And only flowers can talk—
(No need of other inscription,
No need of memorial slab,
Tells that, all still and silent,
Underneath lies our little Rab.

And yet in fancy I see him,
Alert, overflowing with life,
Now racing across the grass-plot
With the children in playful strife;
Then, with head drooping saucily sideways,
On his haunches, with heaving breast,
Awaiting the further onset,
While the children stop to rest.

Rab, with his coat so silky,
Seal brown set off by white,
With his long, soft ears, and his questioning eyes
Aglow with an inner light;
Shall we see him no more forever,
Will he come no more at our call,
He, the delight of the household,
The merriest, maddest of all?

Ah, Rab! we will miss you sadly,
As we look at the spot where your name,
Wrought of the ash's red berries,
Glow as if written in flame.
And the flowers will bloom and wither,
For many and many a day,
On the little grave where the children
Have tenderly laid you away.

PLEASURE AND DUTY.

We met, and loved, and parted—the old story :
A bright-eyed maiden she, and I a youth
Who worshipped at her shrine, and thought the glory
That dwelt about her was the light of truth.

O, she was fair as aught of poet's dreaming,
And her large eyes were lustrous as the light
That streams from eve's first star, whose gentle beaming
Pours a mild radiance round the brow of night.

Her speech was soft and musical as singing,
And even now, after long, weary years,
I hear its silvery tones—like sweet bells ringing
In the far chapel of my wasted years.

But she was false as fair—the maid I cherished—
And in my hour of sorest need she fled,
And left me in a maze where I had perished,
But for an angel who my footsteps led :

An angel woman, in whose large calm eyes
Beamed the pure luster of a spotless soul,
Fixed as the star that burns in Northern skies—
The God-fed pharos of the frosty pole.

Though cold at first, seen through the clearer air
In which I breathe, a matchless beauty now
Lives in her perfect form, and flowing hair,
And in the whiteness of her ample brow.

O, ye who worship Pleasure, know that beauty
Flows from within, and makes the features fair ;
See well, and in the plainer face of Duty
Thou 'lt find such grace as angel-faces wear !

HERNDON.

The storm is wild ; the merciless winds, elate,
Drive o'er the waves, and scatter them like sands :
Calm on the vessel's deck, confronting Fate,
The dauntless sailor stands.

No thought of self invades his manly heart,
Though men grow pale and women wail and weep ;
Unmoved he sees gaunt Death, with lifted dart,
Rise from the yawning deep !

In that dark hour, when staggering to her doom,
His wounded ship plunged madly through the foam ;
While, gleaming like a star above the gloom,
Rose his own distant home :

He strove for others—strove to reunite
The frantic mother and her helpless child ;*
And kept stern watch and ward till came the night—
That night of terror wild.

Ah ! gallant sailor ! trusted, tried, and true !
The crown is thine, the martyr's deathless crown :
Henceforth thy name shall live among the few
Which tears alone can drown !

*"My little girl remained on board, and I did not discover that she was sent until I had got into the boat. I afterwards learned that Captain Herndon took charge of her and sent her to me by the next boat by a lady named Mrs. Kitteridge, who handed the child to me soon after I reached the Marine." [Statement of Mrs. Ann Small.]

TO ———.

Softly fades the golden sunlight
From the valley and the hill ;
Softly dies the wind of Summer—
All the leaves are still ;
And the dusky twilight, floating
From the sunset's purple bars,
Sows the boundless field of heaven
Thick with golden stars.

Thus, whene'er I leave thee, dearest,
Fades from me the joyous light
That, when in thy charmed presence,
Makes my soul so bright.
Thus, too, mem'ry, like the twilight,
Brings a holy calm to me,
Sowing o'er my spirit's darkness
Star-bright thoughts of thee.

STANZAS.

[SUGGESTED BY THE DEATH OF CHARLOTTE CANDA.]*

I stood beside the bed of death,
A stranger who had come to see
How one so fair might look whose breath
Was yielded up in agony:
And as I gazed I wept for her
Who lay so coldly quiet there:—
Such griefs all human hearts should stir,—
Such griefs all human hearts should share.

No trace of anguish marked her face,
It bore not e'en the look of death,
But seemed so fresh and full of grace,
I almost listened for her breath!
Around her pure white brow was twined
A simple wreath of snowy flowers;
Mute emblems of her spotless mind,—
She wore them in her living hours!

Upon her face—sweet type of rest!—
Lingered a calm and holy smile,
As on the frozen streamlet's breast
The fading sunbeam sleeps awhile.
It seemed as if her soul had caught,
A moment ere it passed away,
A glimpse of heavenly joys, which wrought
Its impress on the yielding clay.

A lovely young lady, who was thrown from a carriage and instantly
died while returning from an evening party in N. Y. City many years since.
Her grave in Greenwood Cemetery is marked by a very elaborate and beau-
tiful monument of Italian marble.

The sleeper—for she seemed, though dead,
To slumber in a dream,—was one
Whose living presence round her shed
A constant glory like the sun.
Before her smile the mists of care
Fled as the mists of morning fly,—
For joy compels all things to wear
The brightness of its own glad eye.

I thought of this, and well could guess
The grief that burst in sobs so wild,
But not the speechless, calm distress
Of those who once had called her *child* :
Their lingering gaze cut, like a knife,
All the heart's dearest, holiest ties,
As the sweet picture of her life
Passed and repassed their streaming eyes.

I grieved that one so fair should lie
In the cold precincts of the tomb,—
Dying, with none to see her die,
Even in her very hour of bloom !
We know the spotless soul takes wing,
Triumphant in the mortal strife,
But ah ! the weeping heart will cling
Round the dear form so loved in life !

IN MEMORIAM.

[M. C. F.]

Lay her down, the pure and holy ;
Lay her down, the meek and lowly,
 Underneath the sod.
In her womanly completeness,
In her spirit robe of sweetness,
 She has gone to God.

Tendril-like, her thoughts and feelings,
In their silent, shy revealings,
 Twined around the cross ;
Incense-like, her prayers ascending,
Sought thee, Mary Mother, bending
 Low in gain or loss.

Fairest flowers shall bloom above her,
Sweetest-throated birds shall hover
 O'er her place of rest ;
While her body's guest, immortal,
From beyond the heavenly portal,
 Shines among the blest !

KATY.

A little angel-child, with great blue eyes
That speak as plainly as her prattling tongue,
Gave me this lock of hair—a simple curl,
Soft as her cheek and sunny as her smile.
I keep the token with a jealous care,
For when I look at it my mind is filled
With thoughts of truth and tenderness and love,
And innocent simplicity of heart,
And all those lovely attributes that throw
Around endearing childhood that rare charm
Which like the violet's perfume gives to it
A nameless sweetness.—Blissful-hearted child!
If I can read thy horoscope aright
The dawning of thy life is not more fair
Than its late close will be. A vision bright
Shows me thy sun of life descending slow
Mid rosy clouds, the portals of that world
That lies beyond the grave; and voices soft,
Whose tones can reach the spirit's ear alone,
Float from that realm of never-ending bliss,—
'Welcome thou stainless one, no taint of earth
Unfits thee for the bliss that angels share'!

SUB ROSA.

I pluck for you
Still wet with dew
Fresh flowers of every shape and hue,
Which 'neath the skies
Of your blue eyes
Shall fairer seem than where they grew.

This bursting rose
The passion shows
Which my poor lips would fain disclose;
O let it rest
Upon your breast,
And breathe the secret that it knows!

VALENTINE FOR SYMPATHETIC INK.

Dear girl, if thou hadst been less fair,
Or I had been more bold,
The burning words I now would write,
Ere this my tongue had told.

True to its bashful instinct still,
My love erects this screen,
And writes the words it dare not speak
In ink that can't be seen!

TO A COLD BEAUTY.

Lady, I know thine eyes are bright,
I know thy cheek is fair ;
I know that beauty, like the light,
Dwells round thee, everywhere ;
But vain thy charms of form and face,
For ah ! alas ! I know
Thy snowy bosom hides a heart,
As cold as winter's snow !

The lovely rose is often seen
And pass'd unheeded by,
When other flowers of fairer mien
Attract the gazer's eye :
But who, if called upon to pluck
The fairest flower that grows
In garden-plot, or wood, or field,
Who would not pluck the rose ?

For beauty, when its charms appeal
But to one sense alone,
Is like the chisell'd block—we feel
We gaze upon a stone.
Forgive me then if I refuse
To bend the knee to one
Who like the sun is only bright,
Not warm, too, like the sun !

TO A SISTER'S MEMORY.

ONCE again the leaves of Summer
O'er the earth's cold breast are strewn,
And across my heart the shadow
Of another loss is thrown :—
Gently her sweet spirit faded
As the Autumn days came on,—
Days that now are gone forever,—
They are gone, and she is gone !

Two were sleeping in thy bosom,
Earth, that were most dear to me,—
Near and dear,—a father—brother—
Now, alas, thou claimest three :—
And perchance ere next Spring's blossoms
Shed their perfume on the air,
Cold in death's unbreaking quiet,
I, like them, may slumber there.

Wherefore should we wish to linger
In a barren world like this ?
Wherefore shrink to pass the gateway
Leading to immortal bliss ?—
Thus the heart speaks when Death's shadow
Brings the lost and dear to light :—
[When the garish day is shining,
Stars are hidden from the sight !]

Teach, O teach me, Heavenly Father,
So to live that Death may seem,
Whene'er he comes, a kindly angel,
Sent to wake me from a dream ;—
A dream from which, with clearer vision,
Waking, I again shall see
Her for whom these tears are streaming—
Who, perchance, now weeps for me !

TO A VIOLET.

[ADDRESSED TO V. B.]

DEAR first-born of the year,
Timidly peeping forth from the cold ground
When all the earth is drear,—
Ere Winter hath done grieving for the loss
Of her fair jewels strung on bush and tree,
Or ere the golden sunlight hath unbound
The frozen streams—what joy it is to see
Thy blue eye looking upward from the sod,
Moistened with dew, as in mute prayer to God,
Pleading for leafless trees and withered flowers
That have lain buried through the wintry hours.

Thy prayer is answered now,
For Spring hath cast her mantle o'er the earth,
Clothing each naked bough
With the new glories of a second birth;
The sturdy evergreens that all the year
Have worn their honors, put forth fresher green,
And in among their darker tints is seen
The maple's flush,—and everywhere appear,
In fields and wildwood paths, the delicate flowers
That herald Summer's warm and pleasant hours.

So Hope within my breast,
Like this blue violet grew when I saw thee,
And straightway I was blessed,
And life's cold winter passed for aye from me.
The streams of feeling now are locked no more,
But flow to thee, their ocean, day and night;
And in the garden of my heart, like flowers,
Sweet thoughts of thee are growing with the hours
That each day brings:—the violet blooms there,
And the dear heart's ease, ever fresh and fair!

TO V. B., ON HER EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY.

Again thy mystic clock of life doth strike,
And in the chambers of my heart the few
And sweet vibrations numbering thy years,
Linger like music.—From the sea of time
Another wave rolls to thy feet and breaks.
And now, while Summer with averted eyes
Leaves the green earth to wither and grow cold
In the approaching Autumn's blighting breath,
Life's angel drops upon thy stainless brow
The crown of perfect womanhood.

As one

Who stands upon a gentle eminence,
And, looking backward, sees with saddened heart
The paths which never may be trod again
Fade in the distance,—so thou standest now.
The fields in which thy childish footsteps strayed
Are bright in memory's retrospective eye:
The well-remembered voices, whose sweet tones
Made up the morning music of thy life,
Thrill thee with melody; forgotten scenes
Grow bright again; and all the past grows bright,
And brighter for the thought that it is *past*!

But the veiled future hath yet fairer scenes
Than aught the past hath known, for one like thee,
Whose spirit moves by that divinest law
Which shapes the actions of a perfect life:
And brighter, hour by hour, thy life shall grow,
Till merged in that completion which the grave
Hides from our bounded vision. Therefore I,
To whom thy happiness is more than life,
With no regretful feeling greet this day;
Knowing that every year will shed on thee
A choicer blessing than the past hath known,
And bring thee nearer Heaven.

A MAY MORNING.

The cat-bird sings in the tangled bush
That loads the air with its sweet perfume,
And the murmuring bees hide all the day
In the snowy tents of the alder's bloom ;
The silent thrush with a rapid wing
Darts through the sunlit, leafy screen,
Or tilts the branches that over the brook
Wave their tassels of tender green.

From yon lone cottage hard by the wood
Comes the murmur of pleasant talk ;
High over-head in the stainless blue
Sails the silent and watchful hawk.
The distant river asleep in the sun,
Lies in a calm, unrippled rest,
While a single sail, like a snowy gull,
Lazily floats on its placid breast.

Come ye who toil in the dusty town,
Come, and your souls in this sunshine steep ;
See how the earth at the touch of Spring
Hath waked from her long and wintry sleep.
O that your walls of brick could give back
The sun like yonder hill-side green,
In billows of dazling golden light,
With cool and shadowy gulfs between !

ANTE BELLUM.

[MARCH, 1861.]

[ON HEARING THAT THE AMERICAN FLAG WAS TO BE
HOISTED OVER THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT.]

Ay, throw our country's banner out !
In triumph let it wave,
That timid hearts no more may doubt
Its power to shield and save.
The laggard pulse will quicker move
Its starry folds to see
O'er yonder shaft, that speaks our love
For him who made us free.

Like eyes with sad reproachful gaze,
Its stars will look on those
Who falter 'neath their steady rays,
Or, faithless, turn to foes.
Its stripes, like tongues of living flame,
As North and South they dart,
Shall hiss with words of scorn and shame
For every traitor heart.

Then fling it to the eager wind,
Let its broad splendors fly
O'er those who strive again to bind
The severed Union tie !
And should their arms too weak to save
Th' imperilled land be found,
O, let no alien symbol wave
Above this sacred ground !

THE CRISIS.

[SEPTEMBER, 1872.]

The cannons' thunders jar the air,
While mingled with the battle cry
Swells the blown bugle's ringing blare ;
But over all I hear the prayer
Breathed by our sires in days gone by.

'Twas theirs to win ; 'tis ours to guard ;
They faltered not when faint and few ;
And shall we deem the service hard
Who bear the banner many-starred,
O'er which their victor eagle flew ?

O not in vain their memories plead
That we should walk the narrow way,
Content to scorn each selfish creed,
And in our fathers' valor read
The noble lesson of To-Day.

I look at the sky above me,
At the solemn noon of night,
And think of the hearts that love me,—
And the stars seem doubly bright.

But of all the worlds that glisten
In the midnight's dusky blue,
I see only one that is changeless,—
And then I think but of you !

TO M. V. C.

[MAY 13, 1872.]

Spring odors load the balmy breeze
That stirs my garden's budding screen ;
The robin's note is heard ; the trees
Are clothed in mid-May's tender green.

From tree to tree in frolic frisk
I see the nimble squirrels pass ;
The dandelion's golden disk
Is gleaming in the emerald grass.

Along the woodland paths I stray,
And feel the life that upward thrills
In flowery forms that seek the day,
Fed by the late imprisoned rills.

All things are joyous, and my heart
Lives o'er again that happy day
When, hand in hand, we stood apart
From all the world, and life was May !

C. L. E.

It is not long since last I clasp'd thy hand,
And heard thy speech, so rich in least pretense,
So kindly-wise, that all might understand ;
And now the Unseen Hand hath snatch'd thee hence.

And there thou liest, still and pale and cold ;
No more thy well-worn palette, loved so much,
Shall blossom into color, as of old ;
No more the canvas glow beneath thy touch.

'Tis hard to think that I no more shall greet
Thy friendly presence here on earth, and yet
The more than hope that we shall elsewhere meet
Softens my sad and most sincere regret.

White and silent shines the moonlight,
And the earth, in slumber deep,
Smiles, as of the silver splendor
Conscious in her sleep !
How the moonbeams dance and glimmer—
Hunted by the summer breeze—
On the bosom of the river,
Through the branches of the trees !

May this night of quiet beauty
Be the symbol and the sign
Of the holy love that wraps us
In its light divine !
So shalt thou still reign forever,
While the glow of life abides,
As thou now dost, dearest,—empress
Of my heart's deep tides !

A MEMORY.

A year ago, in this dear month of May,
I heard a voice borne o'er the waters say :
" Weep, for her gentle soul has passed away."

The words had scarcely ceased, when on her face
I gazed, or so it seemed, but saw no trace
Of aught save life, and loveliness, and grace.

In an unconscious attitude of rest
She lay, with hands cross-folded on her breast—
Looking, indeed, like one supremely blest.

There was no change, save only that a light,
Left by death's kiss upon her brow so white,
Glimmered about her face, and made it bright.

" What is this mystery of death?" I said :
" Who are the living? Are not they the dead
Who weep, in bonds of flesh, the spirit fled?"

An answer, but from whence I could not tell,
Upon my ear like softest music fell :
All is of God. He doeth all things well !"

Then looking up towards the far blue skies,
Her whom we mourn I saw, in angel guise,
Smiling beside the gates of Paradise.

AMOR PATRIÆ

[WRITTEN DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL CANVASS OF 1876.]

* * * * *

It is *statesmen* not *statemen*, we need in this hour ;
 Not those who are seeking for place and for power,
 But strong, earnest souls, with no word in the mouth
 Unkind or unfriendly to East, West, North or South.
 No mixers of poison, concocted with art—
 The hell-broth of passion—to fire the heart ;
 No arrayers of creeds, setting one against t'other—
 The father 'gainst son, and the brother 'gainst brother—
 In the hope of controlling in frenzy's mad hour,
 The storm they have raised, and to reel into power !

We want *men* in this crisis ; *whole men*, such as erst—
 When the war cloud of liberty darken'd and burst
 O'er the land, and after a seven years' strife,
 Left it prostrate and bleeding, but instinct with life—
 Came forward, each man with his heart in his hand,
 To help build the temple majestic and grand,
 Which through envy and scoffing, through doubts and
 through fears,

Our refuge has been for the past hundred years :
 The temple whose broad-based foundations were laid
 By workmen inspired by the love of their trade,
 (Like those by whom old-world cathedrals were made)
 And laid in cement which they know how to mix—
 The wide-open temple of *Seventy-six* !

STONE FOR BREAD.

A hushed and darkened room ; within
A dead man lay ; the rites begin :
I listened, but I did not hear
The tender words that soothe and cheer
The wounded heart, and bring relief
In presence of o'er-mastering grief ;
But only such as served to shed
Light on the folly of the dead.
No blessed words of hope and cheer
Floated above the dead man's bier :
No veil o'er human weakness thrown—
No bread was given—but only stone.

But in the room methought I saw
The grand expounder of Christ's law,
And heard these whispered words that shed
Bliss on the living and the dead :
" Faith, Hope and Charity, these three ;
But the greatest of these is Charity."

OLD TRINITY CHURCH.

[NEW YORK.]

Farewell ! farewell ! they 're falling fast,
Pillar and arch and architrave ;
Yon aged pile , to me the last
Sole record of the by-gone past,
Is speeding to its grave :
And thoughts from memory's fountain flow
(As one by one, like wedded hearts,
Each rude and mouldering stone departs,)
Of boyhood's happiness and wo,
Its sunshine, and its shade :
And though each ray of early gladness,
Comes mingled with the hues of sadness,
I would not bid them fade ;
They come as come the stars at night,
Like fountains gushing into light ;
And close around my heart they twine,
Like ivy round the mountain pine !

Yes, they are gone—the sunlight smiles
All day upon its foot-worn aisles ;
Those foot-worn aisles ! where oft have trod
The humble worshippers of God,
In times long past, when Freedom first
From all the land in glory burst !
The heroic few ! from him whose sword
Was wielded in his country's cause,
To him who battled with his word,
The bold expounder of her laws !
And they are gone—gone like the lone
Forgotten echoes of their tread ;
And from their niches now are gone,
The sculptured records of the dead !

As now I gaze, my heart is stirred
 With music of another sphere ;
 A low, sweet chime, which once was heard,
 Comes like the note of some wild bird
 Upon my listening ear ;
 Recalling many a happy hour,
 Reviving many a withered flower,
 Whose bloom and beauty long have laid
 Within my sad heart's silent shade :
 Life's morning flowers ! that bud and blow,
 And wither ere the sun hath kiss'd
 The dew-drops from their breasts of snow,
 Or dried the landscape's veil of mist !
 O ! when that sweetly-mingled chime,
 Stole on my ear in boyhood's time,
 My glad heart drank the thrilling joy,
 Undreaming of its future pains ;
 As spell-bound as the Theban boy
 List'ning to Memnon's fabled strains !

Farewell, old fane ; and though unsung
 By bards thy many glories fell,
 Though babbling fame hath never rung
 Thy praises on his echoing bell ;
 Who that hath seen can e'er forget
 Thy gray old spire ? Who that hath knelt
 Within thy sacred aisles, nor felt
 Religion's self grow sweeter yet ?
 For though the decking hand of Time
 Glory to Greece's fanes hath given,
 That from her old heroic clime
 Point proudly to their native heaven :
 Though Rome hath many a ruined pile
 To speak the glory of her land,
 And fair by Egypt's sacred Nile
 Her mouldering monuments may stand ;
 The joy that swells the gazer's heart,
 The pride that sparkles in his eye,
 When pondering on these piles, where Art

In crumbling majesty doth lie,
Ne'er blended with them keener joy,
Than mine, when but a thoughtless boy,
I gazed with awe-struck, wondering eye,
On thy old spire, my Trinity !
And thou shalt live like words of truth,
Like golden moments of our youth :
As on the lake's unrippled breast
The mirror'd mountain lies at rest,
So thou shalt lie, till life depart,
Mirror'd for aye upon my heart !

EPICEDIUM.

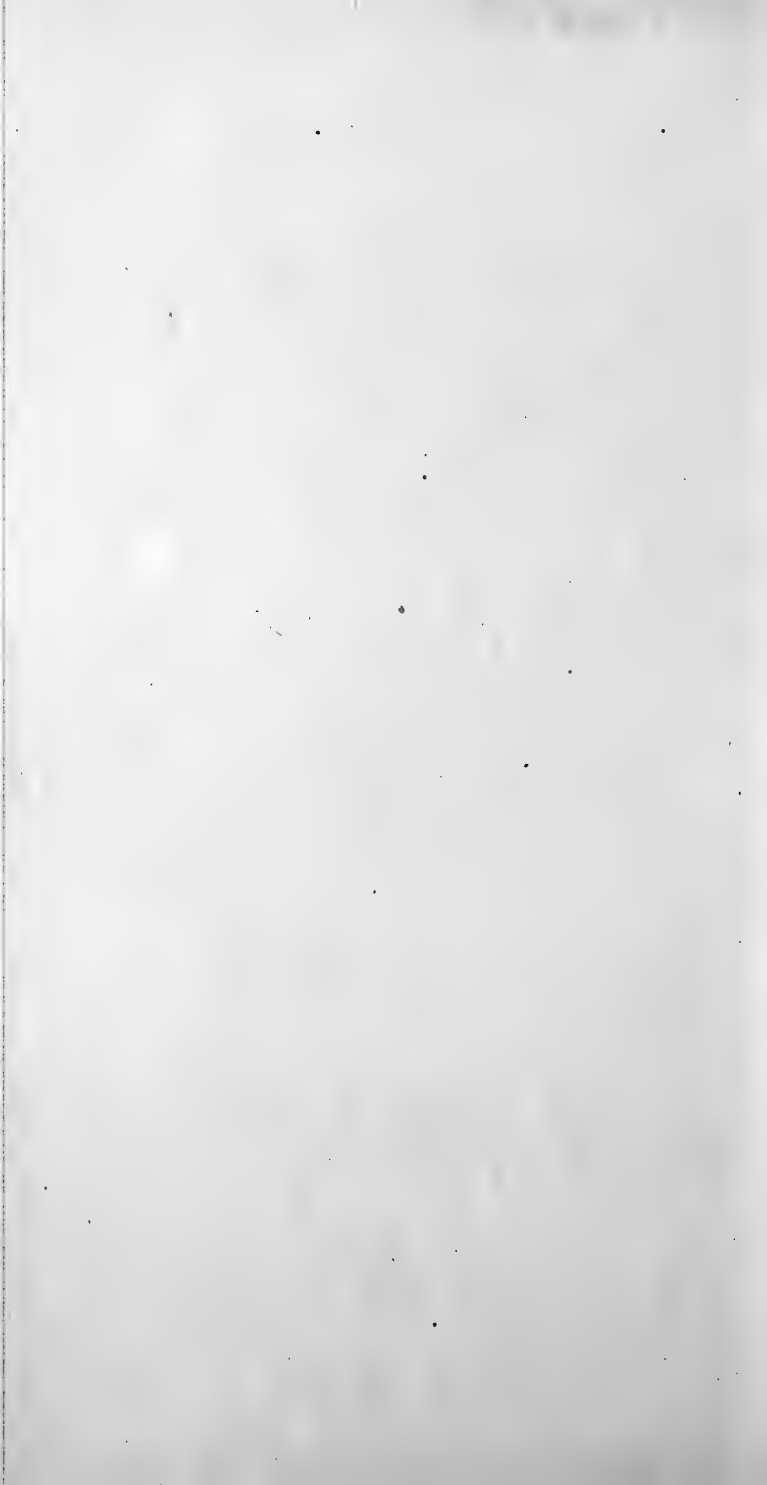
The fires of youth no longer burn,
Their fitful flames are quenched at last ;
And here within this little urn
Repose the ashes of my past.

And is this *capet mortuum* all
Now left me of my vanished years ?
Am I no longer held in thrall
By youthful joys and hopes and fears ?

'Tis even so ; the mountain-side
Is scaled at last ; and now I rest,
While I survey from life's divide
My path that slopes towards the west :—

The sad and sober west, where glow
The embers of the dying day,
That, as the night winds cease to blow,
Fall into ashes cold and gray.

O let me falter not, but tread
Firmly the downward path, nor yearn
For my lost youth whose ashes dead
Fill up the measure of this urn.



SONNETS.



SUNSET.

See with what pomp the golden sun goes down
Behind yon purple mountain ! Far and wide
His mellow radiance streams ; the steep hill-side
Is clothed with splendor, and the distant town
Wears his last glory like a blazing crown.
We cannot see him now, and yet his fire
Still lingers on the city's tallest spire,
Chased slowly upward by the gathering frown
Of the approaching darkness. God of Light !
Thou leavest us in gloom ; but other eyes
Watch thy faint coming now in distant skies ;
There drooping flowers spring up, and streams grow
bright,
And singing birds plume their moist wings for flight,
And stars grow pale and vanish from the sight !

TO A PICTURE.

A sad and lovely face, with upturned eyes,
Tearless, yet full of grief.—How heavenly fair,
How saint-like is the look these features wear !
Such sorrow is more lovely in its guise
Than joy itself, for underneath it lies
A calmness that betokens strength to bear
Earth's petty grievances—its toil and care :—
A spirit that can look through clouded skies,
And see the blue beyond.—Type of that grace
That lit *Her* holy features from whose womb
Issued the blest Redeemer of our race—
How little dost thou speak of earthly gloom !
As little as the unblemished Queen of Night,
When envious clouds shut out her silver light.

FATHER BOYLE.

Beneath his vestments beat a knightly heart,
Constant in quest of good and noble things :
He held his warrant from the KING OF KINGS
Who bore for us life's inconspicuous part
Among the poor and lowly : his the art
That won to fellowship, by words of love,
The weak and sinful—lifting them above
Earth's evil ways,—secure from danger's dart.
And now his task is finished.—Nevermore
Shall pain's pinched features soften, nor the dim
Glazed eye grow brighter, gazing upon him—
The friendly intercessor. On his breast—
(The wave of life now broken on death's shore)—
The sacred symbol lies in flawless rest !

TO AN UNFINISHED PORTRAIT BY PAGE.

Thou, so far off of late, art near me now,
Distinct and palpable in living guise ;
I read thy thoughts beneath that even brow,
I see thy soul out-looking from those eyes,
And almost hear the unuttered speech that lies
Pausing upon the threshold of thy lips.
The thought born at thy death itself now dies,
For death no longer holds thee in eclipse.
Blessings forever rest upon his head
Whose genius, setting time and space at naught,
Hath to grief-blinded eyes this image brought
Radiant with the immortal spark which fled
Ere yet the artist's hand had wholly wrought
This link between the living and the dead !

MOTHER'S INVOCATION TO THE BLESSED
VIRGIN.

Mother of Christ, upon whose forehead shone
The light ineffable that from above
Streamed from the dwelling of eternal love,
That time thou travail'dst with thy blessed Son,—
reshadowing in thine agony the pains
He suffered on the Cross,—O intercede
For her who seeks thee in her utmost need :
In the faint spark of life that yet remains
My scarce-conscious babe ; in mercy plead
That those small hands, cross-folded on his breast,
May not be stiffened in eternal rest :
Thou know'st a mother's anguish, and wilt heed
A mother's prayers, remembering the Child
That from thy breast looked up to thee and smiled!

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND.

True husband and true father ; add to this
A friend as true ; yet more than all of these
Wert thou my friend, who to the bitter lees
Drained thy sad cup of life.—The sphere of bliss
That holds thee now a fitter home will be
Than this half-hearted world for one like thee,
Whose sterling coin of words was minted out
From the pure metal of thy dauntless soul
And bore Truth's image ; who didst fly the goal
That most men seek, and put to utter rout
The swarming host that track the steps of those
Who follow Duty's path.—Behold the close !—
A grave bedewed with manly tears ; a name
Spotless and bright,—the sum of all true fame !

GENIUS.

A great soul never yet was turned aside
From its true purpose : hatred and mistrust—
The portion of the Meek One crucified—
Are in Faith's golden balance but as dust.
Contempt and scorn are to the wise and just
But arrows shot into the woundless air.
Genius finds safety in its own disgust
At all earth's vileness ; happy but to share
The scanty raiment, and the coarse hard fare,
With which the vain world clothes and feeds its
great ;
And from its eagle-eyrie on the bare
Bleak rock, high up above the storms of Fate,
It mounts in the pure air, and takes its way
Right onward to the golden gates of day !

ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL WM. BRENT.

[DECEMBER, 1848]

Mourn not, dear friends, that he is dead to whom

Your hearts were bound by nature's holiest tie ;
No care can reach him in the silent tomb,

And he was full of years and ripe to die.—

Cold comfort to your bleeding hearts, I know ;

But time shall bring relief, and ye shall cease
To shed your tears of unavailing woe,

Nor even sigh to think of his release.

Blessed are they that sink to earth when age

Hath brought the misty eye and furrowed brow ;

Who end at last their peaceful pilgrimage

Beloved for kind, good deeds as he is now ;

And round their names, despite the world's harsh strife,

Leaving the lustre of a well-spent life.

ON THE INVASION OF ROME BY THE FRENCH.

[1849.]

Where wert thou, Freedom, that thou didst not stay
 The coward arm that dared to strike at Rome?
 Could not her woe-worn face bring back the day
 When her Eternal City was thy home?
 Glorious siege! and France, too, struck the blow!
 Welding the chains herself had just cast off
 To bind the limbs that struggled to o'erthrow
 The foe *she* vanquished!—France! the wide world's
 scoff
 Shall thou become for this: the laurel-crown
 Shall wither on thy brow; and Italy,
 Groaning beneath thy heel, will yet be free,
 In the ashes of her old renown
 The fire yet lives, though smothered, whose clear
 flame
 Shall light her glory and reveal thy shame.

Must I not love thee? Lady, say not so—
Teach not thy lip such cruel words to speak—
Crush not the humble floweret that doth seek
In the warm sunlight of thy smiles to grow.
Why should the lofty frown upon the low?
The strong deny their shelter to the weak?
And though I whine no praises to thy cheek,
Nor swear thine eyes with tremulous lustre glow—
I love thee not the less; nay, this should prove
I love thee all the more, since I disdain
To praise thine *outward* beauty, seeming blind
To the more noble beauties of thy mind.
Ah! dearest lady, might I win thy love,
It would redeem all I have known of pain.

Still to be near thee and to hear thee speak,
To gaze into the depths of thy dark eyes,—
This is the only happiness I seek,
This is the only boon on earth I prize.
Bright thoughts like bubbles in a fountain rise
When I am near thee, and all thoughts of care
Are banished from my heart, as in the air
Fade the light clouds of morning: sorrow dies
Whene'er I press thy hand, and I fall heir
To such a wealth of joy when on my ear
Thy sweet voice falls, I were content to die
If in my parting moments I might hear
The music of its tones so soft and rare,
And look my last upon thy loving eye.

If with too rude a hand I snatch'd the rose
From thy fair fingers, think me not unkind ;
For no less doth the sudden gust that blows
The flowers tender petals from their stem,
Love what it robs, than Summer's gentler wind
That hardly shakes the morning's dewy gem
From its frail hold amid the cluster'd leaves :
For does not each repay the seeming theft ?
And if my fancy from my feelings weaves—
(For thee, fair lady, whom I have bereft
Of a sweet emblem of thyself)—a song,—
Wilt thou not pardon me, and from thy mind
Blot all remembrance of the seeming wrong,
And hold me guiltless as the fitful wind ?

If words could say how much I love thee, dear,
 I should distrust my love, as being weak,
 And leave unsaid these words which now I speak :
 But I remember how tear after tear,
 (Sweet tears of joy !) fell on my burning cheek,
 That happy night, when from your lips I heard
 My all of happiness summed up in a word ;—
 And how even then my heart did vainly seek
 For love's interpreter, till an inward voice
 Whispered,—O happy heart ! there is no choice,
 For only silence may such love express
 As that which now your o'er-fraught bosom bears ;
 Thy tongue were spokesman if thy love were less :
 We guess the stream's depth from the calm it wears !

A rose-bud, and from *thee* ! Ah ! how my heart
Throbs as I look upon it !—never yet
Were such rare beauties in a rose-bud met,
As I see here:—these leaves, half blown apart,—
Roseate and soft as are thy lip and cheek,—
Give out a perfume never hid before
In any flower's heart the earth e'er bore.

How lovingly to me all fair things speak
Of thee, the fair'st of all !—of thee, in whom
All beauty is concentrated !—Thus this rose,
Fair in itself, with added beauty glows,
And wears a newer and a richer bloom,
Because once touched by thee,—for whose sweet sake
The strains of a long-silent harp I wake.

ON A MINIATURE.

The same, yet not the same ; here is the eye
Thro' which thy pure soul looked, as it looks now,—
Calm, steadfast, true ; here the unruffled brow,
And the sweet mouth about whose corners lie
Shy, shifting graces that betray what speech
Shall issue from thy lips—soft, gracious words,
Sweet as the songs of Summer's earliest birds
When in green woods they carol each to each.
Ah ! how my thoughts fly backward, as I gaze
On this dear portrait, to those golden hours
When all the earth for me was sown with flowers,
And all too short the Summer's longest days.
With the same love that thrilled me then, I now
Press to my lips thy pictured cheek and brow.

QUEEN EMMA.

Dead in the mid-Pacific!—Hapless Queen,
Widowed and childless when thy woman's heart
Was fresh and young, but bearing sorrow's smart
As 'twere another wreath which the Unseen
Had crowned thee with—a wreath of sadder mien—
The cypress, not the orange,—and yet worn
Meekly, as mindful that the rose's thorn—
Even as the rose itself—though sharp and keen,
Is God's gift none the less.—I heard thee tell
Of happy days spent in the island home
Of England's laureate.—Were mine his spell,
A wave of fitting verse should break in foam
At thy grave's foot, while fairest flowers should smile
Above thee in the far Hawaiian isle!

